



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday 18 February, 2025
6:30 PM**

**Council Chamber
Level 1
Footscray Town Hall
61 Napier St, Footscray**

MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Pradeep Tiwari (Chair)
Councillor Cuc Lam
Councillor Samantha Meredith
Councillor Mohamed Semra
Councillor Bernadette Thomas
Councillor Elena Pereyra
Councillor Susan Yengi

To be confirmed at the Council Meeting
to be held on 18 March, 2025

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1. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING AND WELCOME

The meeting commenced at 6:32pm.

The Chair, Cr Pradeep Tiwari invited Wurundjeri Man, Daniel Ross to deliver a Welcome to Country to Council.

PRESENT

Councillor Pradeep Tiwari (Chair)
Councillor Samantha Meredith
Councillor Mohamed Semra
Councillor Bernadette Thomas
Councillor Elena Pereyra
Councillor Susan Yengi
Councillor Cuc Lam (online)

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive Officer, Celia Haddock
Director Community Services, Lucas Gosling
Director Planning and Environment, Mike McIntosh
Director Infrastructure Services, Patrick Jess
Director Corporate Services, Lisa King
Manager Governance and Commercial Services, Phil McQue
Governance Officer, Michelle McCulloch

2. APOLOGIES

Nil.

3. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil.

4. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Public Question Time commenced at 6:37pm and 15 questions were received.

Jennifer Chemay asked the following questions:

1. What is the current status of any planning applications or permits related to Anglers Tavern, and what is the council's position on any proposed changes or expansions given the business operates in a flood zone?

Response:

The Director Planning and Environment advised that Council's records show several planning permits having been issued for Anglers Tavern dating back to 1968.

There is one planning permit application currently under assessment which proposes storing five shipping containers within the carpark. Council officers have requested further information from the applicant to enable a proper and full assessment as required by the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (the Act) and Maribyrnong Planning Scheme.

The site is in the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO), which identifies the site as liable to flooding from the Maribyrnong River. Both the Act and the Planning Scheme require planning applications to be referred to Melbourne Water as the determining referral authority and the floodplain management authority. Council must consider the position, comments and requirements of Melbourne Water in its decision on the application.

2. Is Anglers Tavern currently in compliance with all relevant council regulations, including those related to noise, responsible service of alcohol, and patron capacity? We have had several resident concerns with noise levels, consumption of alcohol by youth behind the shipping containers and intoxicated patrons.

Response:

The Director Planning and Environment advised that the current location of the shipping containers within the carpark is in breach of the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme, with officers working with the business owner to resolve that non-compliance. The business owner has lodged a planning permit application seeking to retain the shipping containers, as noted prior.

Should this application be refused then the business owner will be required to remove the shipping containers within 60 days of the decision, unless an appeal is lodged at VCAT.

Matters relating to the responsible service of alcohol, intoxicated patrons, patron capacity and the like are the responsibility of Liquor Licensing Victoria and or Victoria Police. Council is unable to comment on or enforce these matters, but can follow up with those relevant authorities.

3. What feedback has the council received from residents and businesses regarding the operation of Anglers Tavern, and how is the council addressing any concerns raised?

Response:

The Director Planning and Environment noted that over the past 12 months Council has received three official complaints for excessive noise, with the site currently the subject of ongoing monitoring for both noise and parking violations.

Cr Susan Yengi acknowledged that she has met with the question submitter previously and discussed the issues and concerns of residents in the area. She advised she had been made aware of a number of these concerns during the election campaign period, particularly relating to noise, safety and parking challenges, including blocking of driveways.

Lewis Page asked the following questions:

1. Prior updates as to the status of Council's progress to achieve the actions in the Air Quality Improvement Plan have been vague and fall short of considering whether they're delivering real improvements to the inner west's air quality (I refer to Agenda Item 9.7 of Council's 18 June 2024 Meeting, and particularly Attachment 3). Please provide greater particulars, including details of how your progress is actually improving air quality and details of any commitments or responses provided by the State following Council's 'advocacy for a truck ban on Williamstown Road'.
2. If no such response has been provided, what is your plan?

Response:

The Chief Executive Officer responded to both questions by advising that Council continues to deliver initiatives aiming to achieve improved health and environmental outcomes for the community. The Air Quality Improvement Plan guides these efforts and acknowledges that often the most significant changes rely on both Federal and Victorian State Government policy and initiatives. With this in mind, the Plan focuses on advocacy, designed to raise and represent the concerns of the community and to influence long term state government policy and development in this space.

To this end, a range of advocacy initiatives have been delivered including:

- *Advocate for a truck ban on Williamstown Road*
- *Advocate for release of the Victorian Air Quality Strategy*
- *Advocate to the State Government to fund a Clean Truck Program and a Clean Ports Program for the Port of Melbourne*
- *Advocate to the Victorian State Government to accelerate the timeframe for the introduction of the electric vehicle bus fleet*
- *Advocate for the installation a vehicle emissions filtration system in the Westgate Tunnel ventilation stack, prior to the opening of the Westgate Tunnel project*

We have completed 11 (30%) actions in the plan with another 23 ongoing – being either considerations applied in ongoing council operations and decision-making or projects that have commenced but not yet completed. There are three initiatives in the plan yet to commence.

Measuring our progress around the implementation of the Plan is largely focused on advocacy initiatives and seeking policy change at the State and Federal government level as opposed to measuring actual emissions locally. There are a range of initiatives or programs which could significantly improve the air quality Maribyrnong and the broader west, many of which, need to be led by Federal and/or State government. Our efforts remain focussed on collaborating with all levels of government and stakeholders to achieve the Plan's objectives.

The long term plan is to continue to review and implement the actions outlined.

With regard to Williamstown Road, the Victorian Government has released the 'Update of the Victorian Freight Plan - Conversation Summary' in response to submissions made as part of consultation in 2024. No specific response regarding a truck ban on Williamstown Road has been received.

We will continue to promote further improvements to the transport network as the Update of the Victorian Freight Plan proceeds and Council progresses development of a new Integrated Transport Strategy for the municipality. Council Officers continue to work closely with the Department of Transport and Planning to get best outcomes from the West Gate Tunnel project and Cycle Veloway including banning of large freight trucks on major roads in Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay when the WGT opens.

Cr Bernadette Thomas further noted that determination of, and changes to the way trucks use our streets and which streets they access is the responsibility of the Victorian Government. Whilst Council has undertaken repeated advocacy with a number of different Ministers, it still is not state government policy to remove trucks from Williamstown Road after the West Gate Tunnel opens. Council will continue to lead those conversations with the Victorian Government.

Traci Chan asked the following question:

1. Who has given the approval for the Slow Food Market Maribyrnong to launch in Maribyrnong Family Park?

The traffic on weekends into Highpoint is already bad as it is. The parking area around the park is mostly occupied by residents and is going to make traffic going in and out into the area a total nightmare. It is currently a one-way street. Parking for customers at Aldi would be unjust should patrons of the market park at Aldi.

Response:

The Director Planning and Environment advised that Council has provided approval of the trial. In support of the trial of the Slow Food Market at Maribymong Family Park, the event organiser will implement traffic management measures to direct patrons away from La Scala Avenue to alternative areas of off-street parking as advised by our traffic team. Additionally, the organiser has engaged with the owner of private parking facilities at the Edgewater Specialist Centre and the vacant parking lot at Edgewater Square to secure these areas for overflow parking.

Council acknowledges that Maribymong Park is well serviced by public transport, with both bus and tram services operating nearby. To further support sustainable transport options, both Council and the event organisers will promote active transport messaging across various marketing channels.

With the consent of Councillors, the Chair, Cr Pradeep Tiwari extended Public Question Time by 15 minutes at 6:52pm.

Fletcher Bubb asked the following questions:

1. With reference to the recent Facebook post (24/01/25) from Mayor Pradeep Tiwari, that he and other Councillors were going on a Footscray CBD walk; can you please share what were the top 3 to 5 things that the group identified as potential improvements and actions that can be taken to improve the Footscray CBD precinct?

Response:

Cr Pradeep Tiwari advised the improvements and actions identified included safety, lighting, CCTV, enhanced street cleaning, community security, public space improvements, business and economic support for local businesses, flexible retail spaces and night time economic activation. Councillors also discussed meeting and working with the local traders to improve the mall and surrounds, cultural and community engagement, public art and murals, regular events and festivals, youth and community programs, and improvements to connectivity and transport. Cr Tiwari further noted that he had walked through the precinct with the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Nick Staikos MP, and State Member of Parliament for Footscray, The Hon. Katie Hall MP, and identified areas where Council can work with local traders to improve the mall and surrounds.

Cr Susan Yengi noted that Councillors had discussed land banking and opportunities to activate such spaces with the land owners.

Cr Samantha Meredith advised that Councillors had spoken about advocating to the Victorian Government to encourage more services to promote health and safety, including homes and services such as CoHealth to support locals.

Cr Mohamed Semra acknowledged that a thriving Footscray is a thriving Maribyrnong, and noted that there is multiple opportunities to leverage the foot traffic through Footscray Station. Cr Semra also echoed the Councillors comments regarding community safety, and the opportunity to continue partnering with Victoria Police and community stakeholders to address issues such as drugs and alcohol, and anti-social behaviour. Councillors discussed small businesses and how they can be supported to create a vibrant municipality, and enhancements of streetscape and urban design, including widening of footpaths, installation of seating, lighting improvements and adding greenery.

Cr Bernadette Thomas acknowledged that Councillors have received queries and feedback regarding the Footscray CBD precinct from many residents and groups across the municipality. Cr Thomas noted that the activity in the mall area particularly includes people who are under stress and whose lives are likely complex and they may be dealing with complex personal issues, and this needs to be addressed. It is noted that there has been some investment from the State Government in additional outreach and social workers. Unless we as a community can provide assistance address the needs of such people, we are at risk of moving them to another location but not addressing the underlying issues.

2. In relation to the recent announcement of the Creative West project, can you provide details on the reported \$10 million cost estimate for planning and design:
 - (i) will the Federal Government contribution of \$5 million be provided first and spent prior to Council funds being spent, and
 - (ii) how does the Maribyrnong Council intend to fund its' \$5 million contribution.

Response:

The Chief Executive Officer responded that Council has been working for many years on this project and advocating to both State and Federal Government for funding. Council is very grateful to the Federal Government for its support to take this project to the next stage as we take steps to invest further in the CBD of Footscray and the Creative Sector. As the Minister indicated as part of the announcement, the funds from the Federal Government will be received via a funding agreement from the State. To date, Council has not received the agreement to determine the exact terms, however we expect this to occur in the coming months. It is likely that funds will be expended over multiple financial years, and will be a mix of Council and Federal funds across the duration of the project. As such we cannot yet provide specific figures, however this will reported in the future. Additionally, subject to the adoption of Council's budget, Council will make allocations across multiple financial years as part of the regular capital budget allocation, to be adopted in June.

3. In relation to the recent announcement of the Creative West project, can you provide details on how the \$100 million project construction cost was estimated/arrived at and how is it intended this will be funded?

Response:

The Chief Executive Officer advised that the project has been subject to a number of rigorous, externally validated processes to ensure that costings are as accurate as possible. The investment case and detailed costings have been provided by expert economics consultants with extensive expertise in projects of this kind, having built on the concept design developed by the contracted architects. The construction phase of the project is subject to support and funding from both the State and Federal Governments, with Council to contribute funds as well as in-kind support, along with the financial support of philanthropic organisations. Creative West has been a Lead West and Council advocacy priority for a number of years, and Council will continue to seek support from other levels of Government to support construction costs.

Pierre Vairo asked the following questions:

1. Is Council aware that a resident riding her bike was run over by a semi-trailer on Sommerville Road on the 22nd of Jan leaving her with serious life changing injuries?

Response:

The Director Infrastructure Services noted that Council officers are aware of the incident and are liaising with the Department of Transport and Planning to better understand the circumstances.

The intersection of Williamstown Road and Somerville Road is managed by the Department of Transport and Planning including lane configurations and traffic signal operations. Council officers meet regularly with DTP officers to assess road operations and propose remedial actions to address safety concerns.

2. Why did Council elect not to install protected bike lanes on Sommerville Road as part of its recent resurfacing works?
Noting that:
 - a) protected lanes would've prevented the semi-trailer from entering the 90cm wide bike lane that <name withheld> was riding in; and
 - b) with the knowledge that VicRoads data shows there have been three serious bike crashes prior to the resurfacing, and two subsequent.

Response:

The Director Infrastructure Services advised that the most recent resurfacing works on Somerville Road was completed as part of Council's Distributor Roads Program from Geelong Road to Whitehall Street. Generally, the bike lane line marking remained consistent with what existed prior to the resurfacing works. A line marked chevron treatment was included with these works to provide additional separation and safety improvements between the traffic lane and the bike lane along the majority of the route. No line marking changes were made at the intersection.

Cr Bernadette Thomas further offered support for the injured person and acknowledged that they have undergone several surgeries. Cr Thomas noted that as a fellow bike rider who is familiar with the intersection, she can understand how this incident occurred.

A third question asked by Pierre Vairo was disallowed by the Chair in accordance with Council's Governance Rules, as the question was in the form of a statement.

Madeleine Serle asked the following questions:

1. Council received government grants for community flood recovery after the Maribyrnong Floods. Council provided some detail in the Notes to the Financial Statements in the 23/24 Annual Report, including amounts carried forward for financial year 2024-2025.

When will Council release audited financial statements under Australian Accounting Standards & Local Government Act 2020 itemising all funds received and spent/planned to meet:

- a) financial transparency and probity obligations; and
- b) ethical and moral considerations to the flooded community whose ongoing devastation and grief instigated the grants in the first place?

Response:

The Chief Executive Officer advised that in accordance with section 98 of the Local Government Act 2020 the Audited Statements will be presented to the Council meeting in October 2025.

2. Council is a member of the Community Aviation Consultation Group for the development of the 3rd Runway by Melbourne Airport through its appointed representative - along with representation of other impacted adjacent councils.

Would Council please disclose:

- a) past, current and intended actions raised from its membership of CACG regarding the acknowledged flood risks arising from the development; and
- b) the outcomes to date of those representations?

Response:

The Chief Executive Officer confirmed that Maribyrnong City Council is a member of The Melbourne Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG), with the Manager City Development Council's nominated representative. CACG meetings provide a forum for discussion between members, representatives from key participating agencies and Melbourne Airport.

Council considered the Melbourne Airport Third Runway Proposal and Major Development Plan at its City Development Delegated Committee Meeting on 24 May 2022 with the full report available on Council's website. While flood impacts was not specifically raised in the submission, the general environmental impacts the third runway may have on the community was noted.

In November 2022, The Hon. Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government approved Melbourne Airport's Masterplan, with the Minister subsequently approving the third runway in September of last year. The Minister's approval is subject to several conditions, including mitigating environmental impacts. Council has not made any direct representations at the CACG regarding flood risks.

With the consent of Councillors, The Chair, Cr Pradeep Tiwari extended Public Question Time by 15 minutes at 7:10pm.

Glen Yates asked the following questions:

1. In the past two years the Ballarat St crossing situated on Francis St has gained significant negative notoriety with two almost fatal accidents involving pedestrians and trucks gaining significant media attention on both mainstream TV and press.
What initiatives or proactive steps has MCC taken to attempt to improve the safety of this crossing and what examples can you share with the community specifically?

Response:

The Director Infrastructure Services advised that Francis Street is managed by the Department of Transport and Planning including lane configurations and traffic signal operations. Council officers meet regularly with DTP officers to assess road operations and propose remedial actions to address safety concerns. The DTP are continually reviewing operational and safety issues on arterial roads like Francis Street and implementing improvements to signals and physical infrastructure as appropriate.

2. The Ballarat St crossing is used by families with children who attend Norfolk St Child Care Centre, Yarraville West Primary and St Augustines Primary. In order to gather the data needed to help advocate towards potentially having a red light / speed camera installed, is it possible for MCC to position it's mobile VMS (SAM's) close to the crossing to record speeds and activate the "too fast, slow down" messaging on the VMS please? This would be similar to what happened on Somerville Road and Anderson St when monitoring motorist behaviour outside Kingsville Primary and Yarraville West Primary.

Response:

The Director Infrastructure Services advised that Council's Transport team will liaise with the DTP regarding how this initiative could be implemented on Francis Street.

The Chair, Cr Pradeep Tiwari, declared Public Question Time closed at 7:11pm.

6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

6.1. Confirmation of Minutes - 10 December 2024

To present the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10 December 2024 for confirmation.

Council Resolution

That Council confirms the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10 December 2024.

Moved: Cr Bernadette Thomas
Seconded: Cr Mohamed Semra

CARRIED

7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Nil

8. PETITIONS

Nil

9. OFFICER REPORTS

9.1. Quarterly Performance and Financial Report - Period ending 31 December 2024

The purpose of this report is to present the Quarterly Performance and Financial Report for the period ending 31 December 2024 to Council for noting.

Council Resolution

That Council notes the Quarterly Performance and Financial Report for the period ending 31 December 2024, shown at Attachment 1, and that a revised budget pursuant to section 97 (3) of the Local Government Act 2020 is not required.

Moved: Cr Bernadette Thomas
Seconded: Cr Cuc Lam

CARRIED

9.2. Bellairs Reserve - Draft Concept Plan

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Bellairs Park Concept Plan for endorsement by Council prior to its release for community feedback.

Council Resolution

That Council endorse the release of the Draft Bellairs Park Concept Plan, as shown in Attachment 1, for community consultation.

Moved: Cr Bernadette Thomas
Seconded: Cr Samantha Meredith

CARRIED

9.3. Proposed Closure of Part of Market Street, West Footscray

To seek Council's approval to commence the statutory procedure under the *Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)* to consider closing part of Market Street (Road), between Graham Street and Essex Street, in West Footscray.

Council Resolution

That Council:

1. *Acting under clause 9 of Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act 1989 (Act), "Power to place obstructions or barriers on a road permanently":*
 - a. *Resolve that the required statutory procedures be commenced to consider closing part of Market Street (Road), between Shorten and Barrett Reserves in West Footscray (shown outlined in Attachment 4), by permanently placing obstructions or barriers on the Road (Proposal);*
 - b. *Note that the Proposal involves closing the Road to vehicular traffic and constructing the closed Road into an open space reserve allowing access to bicycles and pedestrians;*
 - c. *Request that public notice of the proposed closure of the Road be given in a local newspaper in accordance with sections 207A and 223 of the Act, uploaded on Council's website and notice sent to surrounding owners;*
 - d. *Authorise the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate to undertake the administrative procedures necessary to enable Council to carry out its functions under section 223 of the Act in relation to this matter.*
 - e. *Resolve that any submissions received pursuant to section 223 of the Act be heard and considered at a committee meeting comprising of the whole of Council.*

2. *Note that once all section 223 submissions have been considered, a further report will be presented to Council to decide whether or not to proceed with the Proposal.*

Moved: Cr Bernadette Thomas
Seconded: Cr Susan Yengi

CARRIED

9.4. Internal Resolution Procedure

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Council the adoption of an Internal Resolution Procedure, to manage alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct, as prescribed by the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*.

Council Resolution

That Council in accordance with section 140 of the Local Government Act 2020 and regulation 12A of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, adopt the Internal Resolution Procedure, as shown at Attachment 1.

Moved: Cr Bernadette Thomas
Seconded: Cr Mohamed Semra

CARRIED

9.5. Victorian Local Government Association - Local Government Working Group on Gambling

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider nominating a Councillor representative to the Victorian Local Government Association – Local Government Working Group on Gambling.

Council Resolution

That Council nominate Councillor Bernadette Thomas as its representative to the Victorian Local Government Association – Local Government Working Group on Gambling.

Moved: Cr Cuc Lam
Seconded: Cr Samantha Meredith

CARRIED

9.6. Arts Advisory Committee - Revised Terms of Reference

To seek Council approval for the Terms of Reference for the Maribyrnong Arts Advisory Committee (Committee).

Council Resolution

That Council:

1. *Notes the on-going work of the Arts Advisory Committee;*
2. *Approves the revised Terms of Reference for the Maribyrnong Arts Advisory Committee, shown in Attachment 1;*
3. *Appoint up to three Councillors to the Arts Advisory Committee, inclusive of a Chair; and*
4. *Appoints Councillor Bernadette Thomas as Chairperson and Councillor Mohamed Semra and Councillor Samantha Meredith as representatives of the Arts Advisory Committee, effective from 18 February 2025.*

Moved: Cr Susan Yengi
Seconded: Cr Elena Pereyra

CARRIED

9.7. Audit and Risk Committee Bi-Annual Report November 2024

This report presents the Audit and Risk Committee Bi-Annual Report – November 2024 for noting by Council.

Council Resolution

That Council endorse the Audit and Risk Committee Bi-Annual Report – November 2024.

Moved: Cr Mohamed Semra
Seconded: Cr Cuc Lam

CARRIED

9.8. Governance Report - December 2024

Maribyrnong Council's Governance Report is a monthly standing report which provides a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance related matters.

Council Resolution

That Council note the December 2024 Governance Report.

Moved: Cr Mohamed Semra
Seconded: Cr Samantha Meredith

CARRIED

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

10.1. Notice Of Motion 2025/01: 'You Win Some You Lose More' Gambling Report

In September 2022, an inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm was established by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs. The inquiry looked into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm, with regard to consumer protections; education programs; current regulations; and most importantly for the community, the effectiveness of current gambling advertising restrictions on limiting children's exposure to gambling products and services (e.g. promotion of betting odds during live sport broadcasts), including consideration of the impact of advertising through social media, sponsorship or branding from online licenced gambling operators.

The Inquiry Report, "you win some you lose more" (You win some, you lose more – Parliament of Australia), included 31 recommendations, which have yet to be responded to by the Federal Government. The Alliance for Gambling Reform (Gambling Harm | Alliance For Gambling Reform) response to the report, supported all 31 recommendations, and encouraged the federal government to adopt and implement them. The AGR has been campaigning continuously since the report's release to see the recommendations implemented and have initiated campaigns and advocacy focused on banning gambling ads altogether. Other community NGOs have also supported

Gambling in all its forms continues to be problematic for many people in our community and across the western metropolitan region, Victoria, and the country. While gambling on poker machines remains a significant issue in Maribyrnong and across western metropolitan councils, online gambling is emerging as a particular issue across communities across the country.

The Guardian reported the following losses in 2022:

"The government said Australia has the highest gambling losses of any country, at an average of \$1,276 a person each year, with problem gambling rates more than doubling from 0.6% of the adult population in 2011 to 1.23% in 2019.

The rates of problem gambling in online users is even higher, at 3.9% of all online gamblers, according to a report from Central Queensland University, compared to 1.4% of gamblers who use poker machines. The government said the size of the "interactive wagering market" is estimated at \$6.3bn, compared to electronic gaming at \$9bn." 'You lose more': Australia to force online gambling ads to include messages on potential harms | Gambling | The Guardian"

illustrating the scale of the problem, and the need for the government to take the report and its recommendations seriously.

Council Resolution

That Council:

- 1) *Writes to the Prime Minister, the Honourable Anthony Albanese, the Minister for Communications, the Honourable Michelle Rowland, the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Honourable Mark Butler, urging the Federal Government to adopt, in full, the recommendations from the June 2023 “You Win Some You Lose More” report from the inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm;*
- 2) *Endorses the recommendations contained in the “You Win Some You Lose More” report;*
- 3) *Writes to the LeadWest councils (Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Melton, and Wyndham):*
 - a) *encouraging them to endorse the recommendations of the report, and write to the relevant ministers (see 1 above) urging the federal government to adopt the recommendations in full, and*
 - b) *asking them to support Maribyrnong to convene a Western Alliance for Gambling Reform, to jointly advocate for gambling reform at the state and federal levels, engage relevant agencies in reducing harm from gambling, and (as per Council’s Reducing Harm from Gambling Policy) to encourage a collective approach to any proposed changes to gambling venues across the western metropolitan area; and*
- 4) *Calls on the Municipal Association of Victoria and Australian Local Government Association to advocate to the federal government on behalf of local government across Australia, to adopt the recommendations in full.*

Moved: Cr Bernadette Thomas
Seconded: Cr Elena Pereyra

CARRIED

11. COUNCILLOR QUESTION TIME

Councillor Question Time commenced at 7:36pm.

Cr Samantha Meredith asked the following questions:

1. Can Council provide an update on its advocacy efforts regarding the lack of filtration in the ventilation stacks of the West Gate Tunnel Project?

Specifically:

- a) What actions have been taken by Council to communicate concerns about unfiltered emissions to the relevant state government and West Gate Tunnel?
- b) Whether any recent discussions have occurred to request for the installation of filtration systems?
- c) What additional steps does Council plan to take to advocate for filtration in the ventilation stacks to enhance air quality and support improved public health outcomes?

Response:

The Chief Executive Officer advised that Council has actively advocated to both State and Federal Governments regarding the ventilation stacks of the West Gate Tunnel Project. This week, the Mayor has written to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Gabrielle Williams MP, and the Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos MP, requesting meetings to discuss the ventilation stack filtration. Since mid-2023, several letters have been sent to Ministers, including the Premier Jacinta Allan, the Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos MP, the Minister for Transport Infrastructure Danny Pearson MP and the Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne MP.

This correspondence has requested the inclusion of filters in the West Gate Tunnel ventilation stacks. This is in addition to other meetings with government and other stakeholders to discuss air quality improvement. The correspondence from Council have highlighted our Health Emergency Declaration, the need for air quality actions in the inner West, and the role that the ventilation stacks will play to support this.. Council also acknowledged the recent efforts by the Victorian Government to address the issue.

On June 11, 2024, Minister Pearson responded to the Council, advising that the Victorian Government's position remains unchanged. He stated that the West Gate Tunnel's ventilation system was designed to meet Victoria's air quality standards. According to the response, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) approved the air quality measures, and filters are not required to meet air quality standards. Council will continue advocating, however this is consistent response received.

The West Gate Tunnel Environment Effect Statement is referenced to support this. The Victorian Government's position is that the filters will not be required, however the project has been designed to allow for retrofitting if needed.

The correspondence sent to Minister Williams and Minister Dimopoulos express Council's opposition for the filters to be retrofitted and calls for them to be pre-installed as part of the State Governments Clean Air for All Victorians strategy.

Additionally, Council has incorporated the West Gate Tunnel Ventilation filters into our Air Quality Advocacy Ask. Since Council's declaration of a Health Emergency, the Air Quality strategy has been distributed extensively to state and federal government ministers, and organisations including the Climate Change Authority, creating a strong platform for which to advocate for ventilation filters.

Cr Bernadette Thomas asked the following questions:

1. Could the Chief Executive Officer provide an update ongoing collaborations exist with Victoria Police and community services to respond to needs Footscray CBD and improve public safety.

What actions has Council undertaken to enhance public safety and address community concerns in the area?

2. What formal advocacy has Council engaged in with the State Government to support a coordinated response to public health and safety challenges in Footscray?
3. What further advocacy efforts does Council plan to undertake to ensure continued support and resources for addressing these issues effectively?

Response:

The Chief Executive Officer advised that Council continues to work in partnership with Victoria Police in addressing community concerns around public safety in Footscray CBD. This includes two VicPol operations in November and December, supported by Council and led by the Footscray Neighbourhood Policing Unit, which attracted positive community feedback through various channels.

Council continues to support local organisations to activate Nicholson Street Mall and surrounding area through our Love Your West from December 2024 to June 2025. Council is also piloting the Creative Places program to activate empty shopfronts and underutilised spaces in Footscray CBD. We four landlords agreed to participate, and have invited more landlords to participate.

Council will soon commence short-term works at Maddern Square that will include resurfacing 220sqm of concrete, the installation of a half-court for ball sports and skate elements.

Council advocated alongside Katie Hall MP to see an increase in resources available to CoHealth outreach services in Footscray. This resulted in:

- *Funding for a daily alcohol and other drug outreach service in Footscray.*
- *The expansion of the City Street Health program in Footscray for people struggling with chronic addiction.*

- *The new Footscray outreach service operated by CoHealth.*

Council is also key member of the Future Footscray Steering Group that was established by Katie Hall MP in 2024.

Council has and continues to advocate for:

- *Local mental health and outreach services provided by the state government*
- *Addressing the housing crisis for low-income and at-risk people.*
- *Improvements to the bus interchange in Footscray CBD.*
- *Safer streets for cyclists and pedestrians to encourage active transport.*
- *Ensure that existing planning permits for significant redevelopment sites in central Footscray are realised.*

After successfully obtaining a \$5M grant for Creative West design phase (which Council will match), Council will continue to advocate for the precinct's construction to transform the area into a vibrant cultural precinct that will help reinvigorate the creative, hospitality and retail sectors in the area.

4. In regards to the CoHealth outreach services, does the funding for the this have an end date?

This question was taken on notice by the Chief Executive Officer, with the following response provided by the Director Community Services:

The CoHealth outreach service is funded through to 30 June 2027 under the Statewide Action Plan.

The Chair, Cr Pradeep Tiwari, declared Councillor Question Time closed at 7:46pm.

12. URGENT BUSINESS

Nil.

13. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Nil

14. MEETING CLOSURE

The Chair, Cr Pradeep Tiwari, declared the meeting closed at 7:46pm.



To be confirmed at the Council Meeting
to be held on 18 March, 2025.

Chair, Cr Pradeep Tiwari